



Nathan Deal
Governor

10 Park Place South SE, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 656-5957

Bobby Cagle, MSW
Commissioner

Pre-K – FY2012 Budget
Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Governor's New Pre-K Model:
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Q- How much money is being saved by this new Pre-K model?

A - The new model is projected to save \$54 million. Though cuts were necessary, the model ensures that the universality and high quality of the program is maintained.

Q- The Governor's model reduces the Pre-K calendar by 10%. This effectively moves the program from 10 to 9 months. Will centers and school systems be able to create their own school calendar to meet this 10% reduction? Will all programs be required to follow one model?

A - We will work with all stakeholders to determine the best way for implementing this change and how can we reduce hardships for children, parents, and providers. We are working on a process for submission of requests. We will provide additional information as it becomes available.

Q - How many instructional days is 9 months?

A - The aforementioned savings was calculated by estimating salaries and expenses at 90% of the current payments. We will have 160 instructional days for children and 9 additional planning days for both teachers and assistants.

Q - Since the program will be operating 9 months instead of 10, will the salaries for Lead and Assistant Teachers be reduced?

A - Yes, the salaries will be reduced by 10% under this model. Grant agreements sent for the 2011-2012 school year will reflect a 9 month versus 10 month program. Basically, the cut reflects 169 days of pay for teachers and assistants. Operating costs were only reduced by 6.8%.

Q - How will payments be made? Will the reduced amount be spread over 10 months or will we have only 9 payments?

A - The process has been posted on the website and will reflect payment over 10 months. We hosted a work group on March 18th to seek stakeholder feedback. You can find their suggestions that we incorporated on our website under the Pre-K Changes webpage. We will post all information in the upcoming guideline revisions.

Q - Will the credential/certification requirements for lead teachers change?

A - Credential/certification requirements will remain the same. The minimum credential for a Lead Teacher will be a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

Q - Will teachers in local school systems still earn T&E?

A - Currently certified teachers will be paid on the current rate including T&E. However that rate will be reduced to reflect 9 months or 90% of the current salary payments. T&E will be capped at the current rates for all returning teachers and will not be offered for newly hired teachers.

Q - Are the pay rates for teachers still the same? Will teachers still be paid by zone and credentials?

A - The nine current pay scales reflecting both credentials and market rate zone will be kept in place. However, all salary payments will be reduced by 10%. The updated salary rates are posted on the website.

Q- Will local school systems and child care programs have to make up the difference in pay between Pre-K teachers and the rest of the teachers in the building?

A - These are decisions that will have to be made at the district or program level. DECAL would not require programs to pay for any additional days beyond the grant requirement (160 instructional plus 9 planning).

Q - The Governor's model increases class size to 22. How will this affect my licensing status if 22 exceeds the number that I am licensed to serve in my Pre-K rooms?

A- The Pre-K Division is working closely with the licensing division to institute a waiver process for centers that may be impacted by this class size increase.

Q - Head Start regulations require no more than 20 children in Head Start classrooms. What do I do now that Pre-K is requiring 22? I will be out of compliance with Federal regulations.

A- It is acceptable for Head Start / Pre-K Blended classes to serve only 20 students per class to comply with the Head Start regulations. The class payment will be based on the per child rate for the number of children served.

Q- Will there still be equipment and supply money available to purchase materials for the 2 extra children in the class? What will that amount be?

A - Yes, operating costs are not being reduced by 10%. Rather these costs are being reduced by only 6.8%. The additional 3.2% can be used to purchase any additional equipment or supplies.

Q- With 2,000 additional slots how might our capacity be affected? Will this cause problems with keeping my classes filled?

A - With almost 10,000 students on the waiting list, we do not anticipate issues with filling classes.

Q- How many new classes will be funded for the 2011-2012 school year?

A - The new budget includes 2,000 new slots. This should help reduce the waiting lists in key areas. The new model also raises the class size from 20 to 22. 86,000 slots divided by 22 children per classroom = 3,909 Pre-K classrooms for next school year. Currently there are 4,215 Pre-K classrooms. Therefore, Georgia's Pre-K will face a reduction of 306 classrooms statewide next school year.

Q - How many classes will have to be closed? What will the process be for closing classes?

A - About 100 Pre-K programs generally close each year due to reduced enrollment, program closings, etc. Taking that into account, we anticipate having to close an additional 200 classes. We will need to close a total of 306 classrooms. We will ensure that the closings will have the least impact on children and families. Please visit our website to the final list of closings by county. We looked at multiple sources of data including low enrollments, late roster submission, waiting lists, CCS compliance and probation sites. The formula can be found on our website as well.

Q - Will an application be released for the 2011-2012 school year?

A - There will be no new or expansion application released. Any continuation provider in good standing will receive additional instructions via PANDA in regards to continuation funding.

Q - Is the Transition Coach Grant a part of the new budget?

A - The new budget does not include funding for the transition coach grant.

Q - What is the timeframe for when updated Pre-K Operating Guidelines will be made available, and when will renewal grant agreements be sent to existing providers for review?

- A - The updated Pre-K Operating Guidelines were posted on July 1st. We now anticipate that grant agreements will be sent to providers the week of July 11th.
- Q - How do I notify Bright from the Start if I voluntary want/need to return a class(es) for the 2011-2012 school year?**
- A - Please send an email with your company's legal name, site name, and class ID of the class(es) you are returning (the class ID can be found on your rosters or Grant Agreement Attachment A) along with your contact information to Panda.Support@dec.al.ga.gov.
- Q - If I have multiple classrooms and voluntarily give back a class, will I be more at risk for losing my entire program?**
- A - No. We appreciate the early notification and this will not affect decisions made about total site closure. Providers should use this time now to determine how having to fill classes of 22 will impact their total enrollment for next year. In some cases, giving back a class will still allow providers to serve more children. Additionally, some sites don't have the wait list to fill several classes of 22.
- Q - Will we be able to carryover Transition Coach funds next year?**
- A - Yes, more direction is forth coming about the process. This year's Reconciliation Report will have a line for carryover. All funds will have to be spent within the 2011-2012 school year. For FY12, we will allow the TC carry over amount to be spent one of 5 ways:
- 1) PK Salary/Fringes
 - 2) PK Supplies
 - 3) Admin. Overhead
 - 4) Continue a TC staff person
 - 5) Technology for the PK classroom
- Q - Will we be able to carryover Pre-K funds next year?**
- A - Yes, more direction is forth coming about the process. This year's Reconciliation Report will have a line for carryover. All funds will have to be spent within the 2011-2012 school year.
- Q - Will there be a minimum salary requirement for Lead and Assistant Teachers for 2011-2012 school year?**
- A - Yes, we will keep the same minimum salary requirements as this year: 100% salary requirement for Assistant Teachers and 90% salary requirement for Lead Teachers.
- Q - Will there be a minimum expenditure amount for classroom supplies for the 2011-2012 school year?**
- A - Yes, the minimum expenditure for classroom supplies will be \$1,000.00.
- Q - Will there be a minimum class size for the 2011-2012 school year?**

- A - The minimum class size will be 20 for the 2011-2012 school year. Classes will be paid on a per child rate based on a class of 22. Payments will be reduced classes with enrollment under 22.
- Q - Has the payment and rosters schedule been determined for the 2011-2012 school year?**
- A - The payment and roster schedule is now posted on the website under the Pre-K Changes page.
- Q - Will teachers get pay steps if they were due at the end of this year? Example: If a teacher finishes 15 years this year, will she get her pay step increase?**
- A - If the T&E are frozen per the Legislative order, the pay steps that are due at the end of this year will be given prior to freezing the years of service. Using the example, if a teacher had 14 years of service this school year, and finishes 15 years at the end of this year, she will get her pay step increase and then the years will be frozen.
- Q - Will teachers who finish their Masters, Specialist or PhD degrees this summer receive pay at that higher level after the T&E are frozen?**
- A - Teachers currently serving as Pre-K teachers who were enrolled and actively participating (taking classes) in an advanced degree program by March 2011 will receive pay at the higher level upon completion of the degree and verification by the Professional Standards Commission. The change will be effective the month Bright from the Start is notified and all documentation is verified.
- Q - When will the new Child Registration Forms be posted that reflect 160 days of instruction?**
- A - The new forms are now posted on the website. Any providers who have already used the form that reflects 180 days of instruction WILL NOT be required to go back and have families sign a new form. Programs should simply notify parents of the 160 change. Programs can do this through a letter, parent meeting or during orientation.
- Q - Is there a change in the way you pay Assistant Teachers?**
- A - Assistant Teachers have never received T&E payment from our office. We have always funded Assistant Teachers with a flat salary rate. The salary rate listed on the website is the minimum salary that must be paid at 100% next year.